

Ryan Talking Points – Opening Statement
President's FY08 Budget
February 6, 2007

➤ As always, there will be specific proposals in the President's budget that Members will agree or disagree with. And we need to have those discussions. These are critically important decisions, and it's our job to make them.

➤ But this budget lays down some key markers that I wholeheartedly support. The first of them is that the President balances the budget – *without* raising taxes.

➤ This budget maintains the successful pro-growth policies that have fueled the solid, sustained economic expansion that has created more than seven million new jobs, boosted federal revenues, driven down the deficit, and put us on the path to balance.

➤ We've seen double-digit growth in revenue the past few years, and we're now collecting more in taxes – as a share of the economy – than the average of the past 40 years. Even CBO – which tends to be conservative about revenue estimates – has raised its projection of tax receipts for the next two years.

➤ Simply put, our budget challenge isn't that working Americans are sending us too little of their hard-earned money. It's that the federal government is spending too much of it – too fast – to be sustained – and that is particularly true of our entitlement programs.

➤ In the past few weeks, this Committee has heard from both the Comptroller General and the CBO Director, who clearly told us that these programs *must be reformed to survive* – they are simply unsustainable as currently structured. And this is particularly true of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

➤ If we fail to act, these programs will impose a crushing burden on both the budget and the economy, and will ultimately fail the very people they're intended to help.

- I appreciate that the President has addressed this in his budget. Congress must also address it in ours.
- The President also included several recommendations for reforming the way we budget – by making the process more transparent and more accountable. He has included the House-passed version of the line-item veto, and has incorporated some worthwhile earmark reforms as well.
- Finally, I'll note that this budget – for the first time – includes the full estimated costs of the war in Iraq in FY08. Clearly, this is a central issue that Congress will debate this year, and we need to know what we're dealing with. So it is immensely helpful that these costs are included up front, rather than in later supplemental requests.
- In short, critics have tried to dismiss the President's budget – in fact before it was even submitted – claiming that it rests on “rosy” scenarios and “fuzzy” math; that it either doesn't spend enough or spends too little; that it's not “bipartisan” enough, and on and on. But the fact is, the President has put on the table the critical fiscal issues that we do have to deal with. The real question is whether this Congress will face them.\
- *It is my hope that this Committee will use this budget as a starting point, then take the lead, and work in a bipartisan way, to craft the best possible plan to meet our nation's needs – both in the short and long term.*